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The image shows the front cover of an antique book. The cover is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, often called a 'stone' or 'shell' pattern, featuring large, irregular, swirling shapes in shades of dark brown, black, and tan, separated by a network of bright red veins. The spine of the book, visible on the left, is bound in a dark, possibly black or very dark brown, material. Near the bottom of the spine, there is a small, rectangular label with a gold-tooled border. The label contains the text '280. j.' on the first line and '658.' on the second line, both in a gold-colored serif font.

280. j.
658.



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HORTATIO AD FRATRES:

Elegiac Stanzas to the Memory of Burns,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

GEORGE ANSON BYRON LEE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MIDDLE NIGHT."



δεῖ δέ σε χαίρειν καὶ λυπῆσθαι·
θνητὸς γάρ ἐφυς· κἂν μὴ σὺ θέλῃς,
τὰ θεῶν οὕτω βουλόμεν' ἔσται.

Euripides-Iphigenia in Aulide.

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HORTATIO AD FRATRES.

I.

Sons of sorrow, sons of song,
Ye were born to sound a wrong
Which the world has harboured long !

Are your faces hunger-pale ?
And do private ills assail ?
Should they be your only tale ?

Though your path with thorns be rife,
Know, there is no human life
Which is not a silent strife.

Why should envy blanch the cheek ?
Ye are Nature's spokesmen, speak,
Hope is strong, complaint is weak.

Dwell no more on idle themes,
Leave your fancies, sickly dreams,
Where the day-god never streams.

Phœbus reigns in living light ;
Claim the poet's holy right,
Fresher youth, a stronger sight.

What are songs of wild despair ?
Shades of Erebus declare ;
Struggling voices lost in air.

II.

Sons of sorrow, sons of song,
Ye were born to sound a wrong,
And be spokesmen of the throng !

Trouble has some secret cause ;
Happy he, who from it draws
Love of God to keep his laws.

Dark your sky, but it contains
Pent up floods of liquid strains,
Mellow music's melting rains.

As the storm in summer heat
Shakes its white electric sheet,
Let your song-storm round us beat.

Let your notes in torrents flow,
Not in feeble murmurs low,
Not with measured cadence slow.

Like the light with rapid wings,
Lofty thoughts of nobler things,
Strike from out the tended strings !

Louder still your chorus raise,
Pining not for human praise,
Fame will come in after days.

III.

Sons of sorrow, sons of song,
Born to sound the frightful wrong
Which the world has harboured long !

Wrap your dead hopes in a shroud ;
Utter common wrongs aloud ;
Be the spokesmen of the crowd.

Ye have many fancied ills ;
Eating thought the reason kills ;
Look ! the sun is on the hills :

See the world's night curtain drawn,
See a brighter morning dawn,
Soon the light will flood the lawn !

Then the truth, divinely shown,
Shall by all be clearly known,
Not with tangled creeds o'ergrown.

'Tis not well the mind to strain ;
Like the ear o'ercharged with grain,
Droops to earth the loaded brain.

Higher, on the slopes of Art,
Knowledge holds her crowded mart,
But she cannot teach the heart.

IV.

Sons of sorrow, sons of song,
Ye were born to sound a wrong,
And be spokesmen of the throng !

Have ye wandered in the vale
Where anemones so pale
Lose their petals to the gale ?

Is not beauty like the flower ?
See it ravished in an hour,
Victim of the spoiler's power !

See the strong oppress the weak !
Spokesmen of the helpless, speak,
And in song your vengeance wreak.

Ye in virtue's cause have met,
Mighty foes against you set ;
Sharpened words, your tongue-swords, whet.

Let no mist obscure your sight,—
Learn your watchword, lest you fight
Slaying comrades in the night.

Louder sound your fearful cry ;
Mount the breach, a passage try ;
If ye fall, ye nobly die.

V.

Sons of sorrow, sons of song,
Born to sound a frightful wrong,
And be spokesmen of the throng !

Heralds of a noble cause !
No retailers of old saws,
Bidding for a vain applause,

—Who themselves alone proclaim,
Not their Lord, who meekly came
To endure the curse and shame ;—

But like those apostles old,
Who their message plainly told
For reward of stripes, not gold ;

So do ye, undaunted, teach
Truths the hireling dare not preach,
Nor a pulpit-puppet reach.

In the highways take your stand,
Throwing broadcast o'er the land
Thoughts as countless as the sand.

May your lives be pure and strong !
Then the echoes of your song
Shall your lives in fame prolong.

VI.

Sons of sorrow, sons of song,
Ye were born to sound the wrong
Of the nations, harboured long !

Why in narrow cells abide,
Looking on with eyes of pride
On the outer world so wide ?

Ye have heard, in times of old,
How, in Freedom's warfare bold,
Fuller tides of music rolled.

SONNET.

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Well ye know, in bygone days,
How the ancient poet's lays
Dying hearts to life would raise.

Sound your thrilling war-cry now,
And those bards of hoary brow
Will your brotherhood allow.

Yours the war-cry of the race
Against insolence in place,
Mushroom-growths, a throne's disgrace !

Yours the bloodless fight of truth,
War-tried veterans, ardent youth,
Have for Freedom's foes no ruth.

Are ye not the sons of song,
Born to sound the frightful wrong
Which the world has harboured long ?

SONNET.

" But still keep something to yourself,
Ye scarcely tell to one."

Burns—Epistle to a young friend.

HE buys renown too dearly, who his heart
Lays open to the insight of the crowd ;
Oh, give not all to all, but keep a part ;
Some thoughts too sacred seem to sound aloud.
For, as some rarest essences confined
Alone preserve their virtue, so do thou
Some precious thoughts keep secret ; nor allow
Their fragrance to be drunk by every wind,
Each passing wind of rumour, tainting breath,
Which fastens on the loveliest, and doth sour
The choicest wine of life in one short hour,
And makes life's sweetest morsels taste of death :
For who would have his name a common word,
Scorned by the selfish, trampled by the herd !

BURNS.—ELEGIAC STANZAS.

COULD worthy theme a worthy song inspire,
 I then might hope my highest reach to gain :
 On stronger pinions rise, nor fear to tire,
 Fit audience find, nor find my song in vain.

Could'st thou, great shade, from thy great height look down
 On feeble efforts formed to hymn thy praise,
 Say, would'st thou now despise the poet's crown ?
 Would'st thou refuse this humble wreath of bays ?

Though fickle Fortune thee her gifts denied,
 She fed with hunger thine aspiring soul ;
 And Poverty, stern mother, nursed thy pride,
 And brought thee forth impatient of control.

What though in mist the mountain hides its head,
 Not less its summit emulates the sky ;
 So o'er thy lofty soul thick sorrows spread,
 And seemed to hide thee from the vulgar eye.

Like thine own daisy, how "thou glintedst forth
 Amidst the storms" which shook thine atmosphere,
 Till, torn by force away, thy parent earth
 Became thy grave, thy coffin, and thy bier !

Full well may Scotia boast a son like thee,
 Though thou wast free of all the human-kind,
 Thou narrowedst not thy soul, for thy "countree"
 And every land was thine to thy great mind.

Fresh from the hand of Nature didst thou come,
 Unchecked by Art thy song profusely flowed :
 For thou wert Nature's priest, her fane thy home,
 And all thy notes thy home affections showed.

'Tis not the courtly poet's venal strain,
Set off with learning's artificial glare,
That can the world's attentive millions gain,
Arouse their sympathy, or soothe their care !

Grudge not the sons of genius their reward,
Their path in sorrow's gloom too often lies ;
Oh, could we now a fitting praise accord !
In what triumphant notes our song would rise !

Smooth is the laurel's leaf, for ever green,
No treacherous thorns defend its stately stem ;
But in its beauty poison lurks unseen,
Wreathed round the brow, how sad the diadem !

Sad truth we learn to check presumptuous pride,
Where genius shines a beacon on the steep,
Where barks so few secure at anchor ride,
So few survive "the dangers of the deep."

Some, whom base envy prompts, will point the sneer
At human weakness in the sons of song,
But though for gifted minds we wisely fear
Can justice brand the bard, yet spare the throng ?

These seem for nought to live, but pass their time,
Their country, birth, and death, some record shows ;
He lives for every age, and every clime,
Poor harvest reaps for golden seed he sows !

Then who with prying gaze would harshly scan
Faults of an open nature all too free,
Whose faults and virtues both declared the man
Of noble soul, and mind of high degree ?

How sad his life ! whose mind, though wisdom's seat,
Impulsive yields, when passion leads the fight ;
A wounded conscience smarts not in the heat
Of contest dire, but suffering comes with night !

Alas ! too often have we to deplore
The flower of genius blighted in the bud,
The world's cold censure chills the heart's warm core,
And stills the youthful stirring of the blood.

'Twas well for thee that merit great as thine
Not unacknowledged shed its piercing ray—
Though hid from sight, the diamond still will shine,
But brought to light, what beauties will display !

The soul that struck from out thy varied lyre
Melodious music bursting to be free,
Was like the cheering light, the warming fire,
Which shine for all and fill the heart with glee.

In tender pathos joined with homely wit,
In truth severe by sad experience shown,
How fertile was thy mind ! which fancy-lit,
Broke forth in song, and mellowed every tone !

To all the feathered songsters of the glade
Thou hadst thy likeness, not confined to one—
Thou like the nightingale couldst sing in shade,
Or like the lark, caroling to the sun.

For varied was thy life, an April day,
The sunshine and the storm together met,
The smile upon thy lips would often play,
E'en when thy cheek with burning tears was wet !

In "honest poverty" thou didst not bend
A bashful head, nor court a servile chain ;
Talents and worth a dignity can lend,
Which purse-proud fools and lordlings ape in vain.

Amidst the titled great thou hadst no fear,
But shew'dst to them a greatness of thine own :
A Nature's noble thou didst then appear,
Not formed by patent, nor degenerate sown !

As long as "gowans" deck the mountain side,
And "fragrant birks" salute the evening gale,
Thy fame, for ever new, its age shall hide,
And still thy history seem a recent tale !

Then future ages shall indignant learn
Of Scotia's bard, who lived in George's days ;
To whom his country gave no meet return,
Renowned for thrift, but prodigal of praise.

O potent, high-souled minister of state !
To make a gauger of a noble bard !
To show thy sense of what was truly great,
And teach us—Genius was its own reward.

Oh, that to happier times his birth delayed,
His lot had fallen in good Victoria's reign ;
Then we, o Burns, had seen some tribute paid,
Worthy thy genius, and immortal strain !

HOPE DEFERRED—AN ALLEGORY.

STILL against hope to hope—yes ! I have known
 The mad infatuation—like to one
 Who, in a desert island left alone,
 Dreams of deliverance ere the setting sun :
 But now my course is almost run,
 Too little time remains,
 For o'er my lonely path Life's lengthening shadow gains.

Go, boaster, go, where is thy honoured guest ?
 Thy feast by harpies' hands defiled and snatched away ?
 Yet, if thou couldst ev'n now afford one hour of rest,
 Thou would'st, at least, in part for thy long cheat repay ;
 But slowly dies the day,
 And darkness strives with light,
 Till Hope to grim Despair resign the gloomy night.

The wild winds howl, their tune I know full well,
 A dreary, dismal dirge they ever sing to me ;
 If ever mortal power did break a magic spell,
 It was to lose the love which once I bore to thee ;
 But nought my strained eyes can see ;
 And what I thought was seen,
 Was but the flickering light which thou did cast between.

There lies a dreary road before me now,
 The darkness flits around the barren moor,
 The mist is gathering o'er the mountain's brow,
 The spray is idly dashed upon the shore ;
 A voice cries " Look before,"
 And if I yield to fear,
 That gentle voice, half kind, half scornful, still I hear.

EMIGRANT'S SONG.

Now, let us leave the land,
 Land of our old delight ;
 Fear not, o kindred band !
 Hope gives us might.
 O'er the full waters ride,
 Ship, with thy gallant crew ;
 Here there are none beside
 Faithful and true.

Weak is his heart who grieves
 Scenes he has left behind ;
 Such are like withered leaves
 Borne on the wind.
 We, like the lark, would soar
 High on our restless wing,
 Like the lark, evermore
 Cheerfully sing.

Home, name of sweetest sound,
 Is but with those we love ;
 Dear is our native ground,
 Dear sky above.
 Though fortune's winter there
 Sends us across the main,
 Summer our ship may bear
 Homeward again.

Oh ! may we reach a land,
 Land of our new delight ;
 May the Almighty hand
 Guide us aright !
 O'er the full waters ride,
 Ship, with thy gallant crew ;
 With us be none beside
 Faithful and true.

SONNET TO W. M.

OH ! why beguile my fancy ? former years
 Brought their illusions, nought is left behind ;
 Faith still has hands to work, though she is blind,
 And sows her seeds, but waters them with tears ;
 I call not God unjust, nor blame mankind,
 But yet this life of little worth appears
 To him who, gifted with a noble aim,
 Feels fettered in his functions, and can claim
 No fitting sphere of action—though he rears
 His pedestal aloft, and writes his name,
 Yet men will read with careless eye, and say,
 “ This poor man had some genius in his way,
 But, wanting purpose, all his plans were marred ”—
 Now, tell me, think you not such judgment hard ?

SONNET TO A. E. S.

On his remarking that the same sun shone for all.

TRUE ! the same sun does shine for all—the light
 Which bathes the eastern sky in fiery hues,
 May o'er some early labourer's soul diffuse
 A joy unknown to revellers of the night
 Whose day begins at noon ; but is *his* lot
 An envied one ? to whom the light brings back
 A sense of struggling onward in a track
 Which leads—he knows not where—where one dark blot
 Hides all the future's page ; where memory seems
 To taunt with pointing finger, and repel
 With past-drawn arguments the rising swell
 Of young ambition, and disperse his dreams—
 The light which dawns to pierce a ruined shed,
 And show pale poverty her straw-strown bed !

SONG :

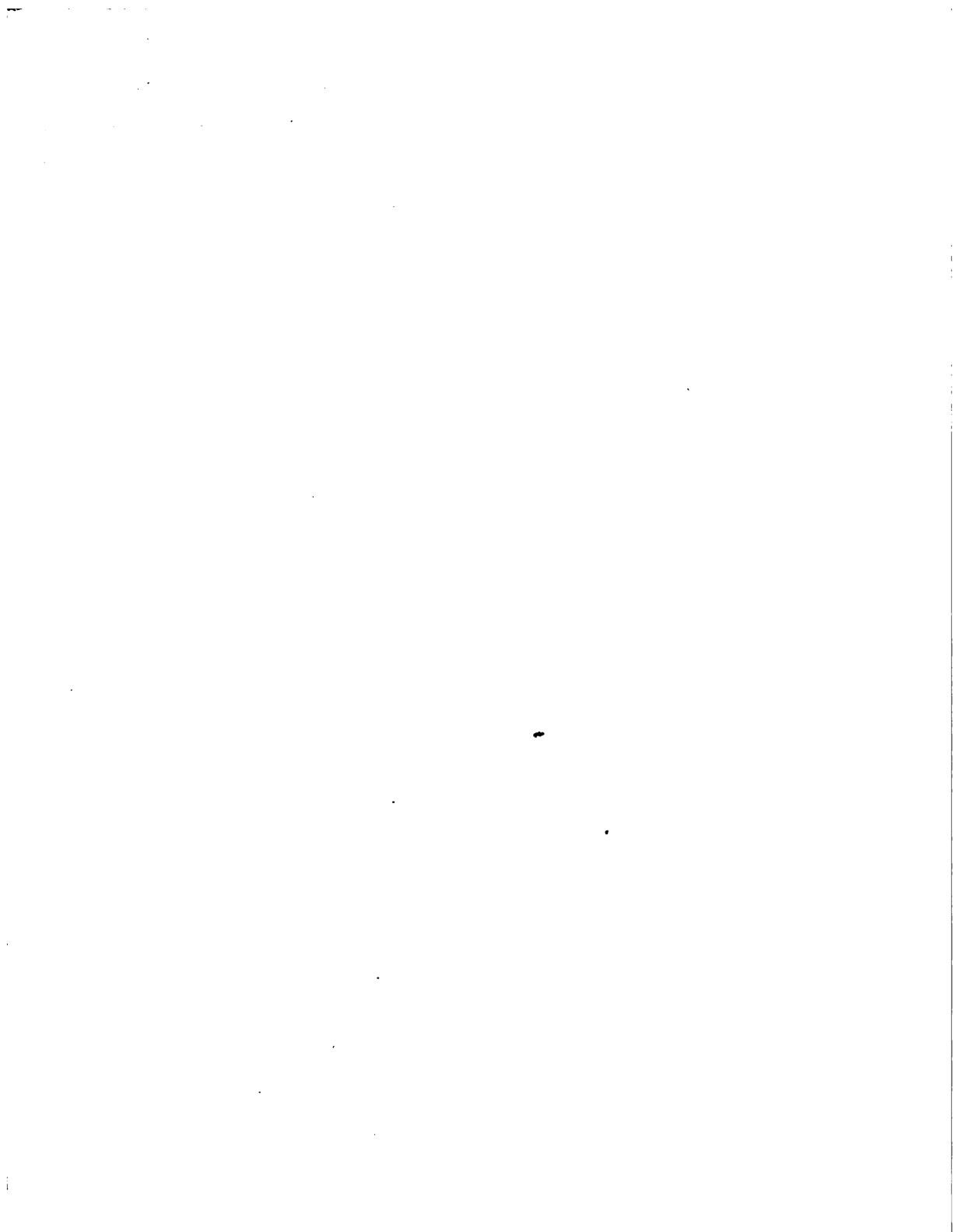
" I SEE THEE, BUT NOT IN THY FORMER JOY."

I SEE thee, but not in thy former joy,
Thou art no longer a frolicksome boy,
For the care of the world has stamped thy brow,
And thou lovest no longer the tumult now.

But that former joy will come again,
And in thrilling delight will steep thy brain,
And thy heart shall yet beat as it beat of yore,
And thy thoughts flow back to the days before.

Oh ! who would not wish in hope to live ?
Though he feel 'tis little that life can give ;
Oh ! who would not love a returning ray
Of the sun which had cheered his early day ?

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